

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and Ranking Members of the Committee, Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

I am here today to voice my support for HB-6589 to make it a felony to drive while under the influence with a child in the car. After having become aware of how often this risk to children occurs, and given my own experiences with such risk posed to my child over the past several years, I was advised and became interested in "Leandra's Law", passed in New York State unanimously in 2009. This law, currently the most stringent DUI law protecting children in the nation, was the result of the efforts of the father of Leandra Rosado, Lenny Rosado, in New York. Mr. Rosado lost his 11 year old daughter to a driver who was impaired. When he became aware that the most the driver would receive was a misdemeanor, he fought to have a stronger law enacted. I have spoken with Mr. Rosado and I have a copy of a letter he wanted me to share with you today.

The reason this measure is required is that all too often, the charge of "Risk of Injury To a Minor" is sadly not enforced, and drivers are allowed repeat an offense again and again. We need a law that will give a driver pause before putting children at risk. We do not need a law that waits until a death or injury transpires before acting to protect our most valuable asset, our children.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Joseph Bango
President & Founder
Connecticut Kids First